

Osteoporosis: Are you at risk?

Osteoporosis is a disease that makes bones fragile and more likely to break. It is not a part of normal aging. If not prevented or if left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. This is why prevention and early recognition are important.

Many women older than 50 are at risk for bone disease, but few know it. At menopause, a woman's hormone production drops sharply. Because hormones help protect bones, menopause can lead to bone loss. Your doctor can help advise you on protecting bone health around menopause.

Look at the list of Risk Factors on the right. Do any describe you? If you check one or more of the Risk Factors, you could be at high risk for weak bones. Talk with your health care provider about osteoporosis.

Risk Factors

(Check any that apply to you)

- ☐ I am older than 65.
- ☐ I have broken a bone after age 50.
- ☐ My close relative has osteoporosis or has broken a bone.
- ☐ My health is "fair" or "poor."
- ☐ I smoke.
- ☐ I am underweight for my height.
- ☐ I started menopause before age 45.
- ☐ I've never gotten enough calcium.
- ☐ I have more than two drinks of alcohol several times a week.
- ☐ I have poor vision, even with glasses.
- ☐ I sometimes fall.
- ☐ I am not active.
- ☐ I have: Hyperthyroidism, chronic lung disease, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, chronic hepatic or renal disease, hyperparathyroidism, vitamin D deficiency, cushing's disease, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis.
- ☐ I take: steroids, cancer treatments (radiation, chemotherapy), thyroid medicine, antiepileptic medications, gonadal hormone suppression, immunosuppressive agents.



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Have Better Bones

1. Get the daily recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D for your age.
2. Engage in regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercise.
3. Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol.
4. Talk to your health care provider about bone health.
5. Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate.
6. If you have osteoporosis, get more information on how you can prevent falls.

Talk about Bone Health

Talk with your health care provider about your bone health. Use this checklist to start your discussion.

- ☐ Ask to check your risk for bone disease.
- ☐ Discuss your need for a bone density test and whether your vitamin D level should be tested.
- ☐ Talk about any fall, even ones in which you were not hurt. Tell him or her about any broken bones you've had.
- ☐ If you have fallen, ask about the need for a full evaluation. Tests include vision, balance, walking, muscle strength, heart function, and blood pressure.
- ☐ Go over all the medications you are taking, even over-the-counter.
- ☐ Ask him or her to check your vision.
- ☐ Know your calcium and vitamin D intake. Report your totals to your doctor.
- ☐ If you would like to try a new physical activity, ask about the best choices for you.

Daily Intake Recommendations

	Calcium	Vitamin D
9 to 17 years old	1,300 mg a day	200 IU
19 to 50 years old	1,000 mg a day	400-800 IU
Older than 50	1,200 mg a day	800-1,000 IU

Sources of Calcium

- 1 cup plain yogurt — 452 mg
- 1 slice cheese pizza — 200 mg
- 1 cup raw broccoli — 180 mg
- 8 oz. calcium fortified orange juice — 350 mg
- Calcium chews — 500 mg

Sources of Vitamin D

- 3.5 oz. salmon — 360 IU
- 3 oz. tuna in oil, canned — 200 IU
- 8 oz. milk — 100 IU
- multi-vitamin — 400 IU
- Calcium chews with vitamin D — 100 IU

Heel Scans

Heel Scans measure your risk for osteoporosis. The results of this test are not a substitute for a health care provider's advice. For people with risk factors or women older than 65, a specialized test called a bone mineral density test (BMD) is recommended. Experts suggest the DXA scan is the best BMD test. Medicare reimburses for BMD testing every 2 years.

A BMD test is recommended for:

- All women age 65 years and older.
- Younger postmenopausal women who have one or more risk factors (other than being Caucasian, postmenopausal, and female).
- Postmenopausal women who have had a fracture as an adult.

What is your number?

Osteoporosis is preventable and treatable. If you have osteoporosis or are at risk for it, talk to your health care provider to decide what is right for you.

